DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 100 358 IR 001 456

AUTHOR	Sitaram, K. B.
TITLE	Modern Man and the Media.
SPONS AGENCY	National Science Foundation, Washington, D.C.
PUB DATE	Nov 74
NOTE	25p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the National Association of Educational Broadcasters (50th, Las Vegas, Nevada, November 1974)
EDRS PRICE	MF-$0.75 HC-$1.85 PLUS POSTAGE
DESCRIPTORS	Change Agents; Changing Attitudes; Community Characteristics; Community Resources; Developing Nations; Development; *Diffusion; Educational Technology; Information Dissemination; *Information Utilization; *Innovation; *Mass Media; Radio; *Social Change; Television
IDENTIFIERS	*India; Modernization; Westernization

ABSTRACT

Modernization is a process of change in the way of life of a person in which he uses available resources and learned techniques to achieve material happiness. Data collected in 1967 and 1972 in the rural communities of India reveal certain characteristics that distinguish the modern person: a keen awareness of his own modernity, highly motivated to try innovations professionally and in his own domestic life, quick to use available information media. Thus the modern man acts as a change agent, stimulating growth and the utilization of the tools of modernization. The government of developing nations, to promote social change, should locate modern persons in rural communities and develop an effective means of communication at the grass roots. (SK)

ED100358

MODERN MAN AND THE MEDIA

K. B. Sitaram
Visiting Professor
Governors State University
Park Forest South, Illinois

A Paper presented at the annual convention of
The National Association of Educational Broadcasters
Las Vegas, Nevada, November 17-20, 1974

IR001456

U S DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH,
EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF
EDUCATION
THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

THE MODERN MAN AND THE MEDIA

INTORDUCTION:

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Social scientists have been classifying the countries of the world on the bases of their economic and political development. The countries that are classified as underdeveloped are automatically considered to be less modern than the developed ones. But no one has yet proposed an acceptable definition of the concept of modernization. Some old definitions of social scientists are based on the degree of industrialization and urbanization of the countries involved.[1] There are also attempts to equate modernization with westernization. Now, in view of the hazardous consequences of overindustrialization and urbanization in the west, it seems that the criteria for measuring the level of modernization should be altogether different. They should probably be measured in terms of the quality, rather than the quantity, of it. The quality seem to depend upon the persons involved in the process.

A study done in 1967 in India has shown that rural communities that listen to radio are more aware of the concept of modernity than those that do not listen to the same medium.[2] Also, the communities with high awareness quotient (CAQ) are more modern than those with low CAQ.[3] But the study did not indicate whether radio was entirely responsible for the high awareness. The 1967 study seemed to point out that modernity is not the characteristic of a country as a whole but it is the aptitude of certain types of persons in all countries. The few modern persons think ahead of others in their communities. Given the right situation, they play the role of catalysts in their communities to bring about modernization. Presence of mass media is the most important part of that situation.

For the purpose of the discussion, it is assumed that the modern persons in rural communities have certain characteristics which seem to be much different from those of the others in the same communities. The ability to change from an old way of life to a new way, or the change quotient, of these modern persons is much higher than the change quotient of their communities (CCQ). Specifically, it is assumed that modernity is not a national characteristic, but it is an individual's aptitude.

In order to test the assumption, the 1967 data were recorded and analyzed. Again, in 1972, this researcher toured India under a grant from the US National Science Foundation. At that time, he collected more data to further test the above assumption. The purpose of this chapter is to explain the result of the test.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

WHAT IS MODERNIZATION?

It is not easy to arrive at a universal definition of the concept of modernization. Process of modernizing a traditional community depends upon several variables in that community. However, it seems that there is a common factor in all changing societies. A few individuals in those societies do not depend upon any supernatural element to bring about material happiness. They do not look to any one person or even their government for achieving such happiness. They take initiative in using the human and material resources available in their own area to achieve the happiness. The modern individuals use of scientific approach to solve the problems of their everyday life. Therefore, modernization could be difined as a process of change in the way of life of a person in which he makes use of human, physical and other resources that are available in his own society and the scientific theories and techniques that are developed around the world in order to achieve material happiness for himself and his people. The modern persons could be seen in all walks of life: teachers, farmers, politicians and physicians, to give a few examples. They have the aptitude to look for new ways of life and in a village any one of them could be instrumental to initiate the change.

On the basis of the study we can make the following generalization regarding modern men. Take the case of a modern farmer in a developing country like India. When the farmer decides to raise rice on his farm, instead of praying to the good Lord to help him obtain a bumper crop, he first gets the soil on his farm tested to find out if the new crop could be raised on that soil. If the tests show that the soil is rich enough to raise coconut palms instead of rice paddy, he decides to raise coconut. Even if his forefathers had raised rice for centuries, on the same farm, he now changes to the new crop. He might even develop a small

industry to produce fiber mats and other products from the palm. In order to get information about coconut palms, he reads books, listens to radio, and seeks information from as many sources a possible.

The Modern Man. The sources of information vary from one rural area to another. All the information that a modern man seeks might not be available in his own village. If a modern farmer, for example, is not satisfied with the information that he gets in his own village, he then goes out to other villages or the nearby city in search of more information.

In many Indian villages, radio is the only link between the villages and the outside world. In the rainy season, village lakes usually overflow. Bullock cart paths and roads leading to other villages and nearby cities are cut off by the overflow. At that time radio links the village folk with the rest of the world. It tells them what is happening out there. The farmer who cannot go to his farm in the rain needs some recreation. The village grocery store is the source of recreation for most villagers. They go there to gossip and have fun. But the modern man does not seek such entertainment. He listens to radio. When he does go to the store, he discusses matters such as his state, national and international affairs. Even the sight of the modern man alerts the others. As long as he is in the store the others are also serious. When it is not raining and the modern man needs some entertainment, he rides on his bicycle to the city to visit movie houses. Whenever there is an industrial fair or a five year plan exhibition, he visits the fair and the exhibition. The kind of questions he asks the guides at the fair and the exhibition are aimed at getting information that should help him in improving the quality of his life.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

The modern man is not satisfied with what he has. He always thinks of innovations in his profession and betterment of his life. He takes life seriously. He almost looks like a man with a mission.

Men who are constantly trying to innovate their professions and improve their lives are seen in all countries. Their life styles are different. They think differently. Since the environments in which they live are not always the same, the problems that arise out of them are also not the same. Therefore, the modern man in each community develops his own method of solving his problems and achieving happiness.

Some Common Factors. Earlier, we mentioned that there are a few characteristics that are common for all modern persons. There are some that do not depend upon, any supernatural element to help them achieve material happiness. They use scientific techniques to solve their everyday problems. They are aware of the fact that scientific theories developed in one part of the world hold good for other parts also. Theories lead to innovations. Innovations are designed to improve the quality of life. But they also create new problems. For example, although the so called "Green Revolution" has helped many poor countries, the new strains of plants have been subject to new diseases and pests. The farmer who raises those strains needs information to cope with the problem of pests.

The modern farmer, whether he lives in India or America, knows that farmers in other parts of the world should be facing, and probably solving, the problems similar to the ones he is faced with. Therefore, he sees a need for lines of communication between himself and the others. He believes that by sharing knowledge through mass media, modern men can help each other. In any country the first few persons to use new sources of information such as a new professional journal are the modern ones. Of all the people in his community, it is the modern man who can articulate the community's problems very well. His articulation sounds

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

like a speech he heard on radio. Mass media helps him understand, articulate, and solve his problems.

In the United States, the media, particularly television, have been instrumental in bringing about awaremess of the problems of minorities. They have shown to their audience that, if equal opportunity is given to them, minorities could equal the majority in any area. Minority problem is just one example of the media functioning as informants of social change. Modern men learn from the media and strive to achieve change in their societies.

The modern man in India also realises that mass media can cause new awareness and stimulate modernization. He knows that even the presence of a radio can stir his neighbors. It can make them think of things that they had never heard of before. One of the earliest efforts he makes toward modernization is to get a radio. Like the American farmer of the 1940's who was the first one to buy a color television set in his village and to show it to all his friends, the Indian neatly places the radio set on a doily and exhibits it proudly to all his neighbors. Not only radio but also newspaper is a proud possession of the modern man. Because he knows that awareness is the first stage in the process of modernization, he considers radio, books, magazines and newpapers as the most valuable things he can own.

Awareness the first stage. The question that arises from this discussion is: which comes first, modernity or the media? It seems that only a few individuals in each community are prone to modernization. Although they have the potential, they need an instrument to "wake" them up. In the process of modernization, awareness is the first step. It seems there are three main stages in the process.

Information-------- Motivation-------- Action

Awareness is the result of information given by the media or interpersonal

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

networks. Content of the information and the method of disseminating it are responsible for motivating the audience. Motivated audience take effective action to modernize. There have not been too many studies to make any definite statement on how the media motivate the people. But we may hypothesise that the meida can convince their audience of the need to modernize. For example, when a documentary film includes scenes of happiness in a small well planned family and miseries in a large unplanned family, a few audience might clearly see the need to control population explosion. Those few are probably the ones with the aptitude to change. Sometimes, even the presence of a community radio or a village library might motivate some village dwellers. The information given by radio or library might make the modern ones think of a new world. Information about a new rice hybrid given by radio might make a modern farmer think of raising it not only to feed his family but also sell it for a profit. When he hears about the modern methods of educating children in other countries, he might think of adapting those methods in his own home. In other words, mass media information can create the awareness that is needed to motivate even the modern man. Although the few individuals in each community have the potential for social change, they need a stimulent, like a mass madium, to activate the change.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

THE MODERN MAN IN INDIA

We have hypothesised extensively on the nature of modern men in all countries in general. Although we included a few examples of such men in India, we did not focus on their special characteristics. Since more than 80 per cent of the Indian people live in rural parts, we believe the modern men in those parts are most important since they are instrumental in bringing about modernization in their communities. The 1967 and 1972 data give us some information on the characteristics of these men.

The methodology. Ten rural villages in Mysore state, south India, were selected for the study. In the population of the ten villages independent variables such as literacy, per capita income, caste and profession were approximately the same. Use of mass media, another independent variable differed from village to village. Three villages were in the shadow of a mountain and could not receive good signals from the regional radio station of the government controlled All India Radio. These villages also suffered from lack of other means of communication such as motorable roads. Consequently, newspapers and other means of mass communication could not reach the villagers as fast as they did in the other villages.

Three villages received good signals, had good roads and had newspapers delivered to them promptly everyday. These villages had also received community radio sets given away by the government. Those people that could not afford their own sets listened to the community radios.

Two villages had only community radios and the remaining two had only radios owned by rich individuals. The individual radio owners invited friends to their homes to listen to radio. Radio was a prestige symbol in those villages.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

The sample. For the original study done in 1967, we randomly selected a sample of 270 persons. But we could not use the data of all of them for the purpose of this study since the data did not lend themselves to the recoding. We selected only 184 subjects for this study. The mean awareness of the sample was about 66 and the standard deviation was about 44. We added half the standard deviation to and subtracted half from, the 66 and arbitrarily decided the levels of high and low awareness to be 88 and 44. (see table 1). Thus we divided the sample into High, Medium and Low awareness groups.

The awareness. Awareness of the subjects was measured in terms of what they knew in the following seven areas.

State, national and international affairs.

Farming technology and soil science.

Health and family palnning

Religions and cultures of India.

The nations five year plans.

Information about mass media.

Space science.

Questions were based on the content analysis of messages that were given by radio, newpapers, government and private documentary films, government and private exhibitions and fairs, and public speeches. Altogether 389 questions were asked in the above seven areas.

Some characteristics of the modern men. We studied the modernity of the high awareness subjects as compared with that of the low awareness subjects. We found that the high awareness ones (N=61) were more modern than the low awareness ones (N=71). The moderate or the medium awareness subjects (N=52) were in the transitory stage between low awareness and high awareness and therefore were moderately modern.

The highly aware subjects had many striking characteristics that could be

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

considered modern. Arrangement of their homes, use of framing equipment on their farms, their level of thinking as reflected in their answers, and even the way they dressed indicated that they had a high change quotient as compared with their community's change quotient (CCQ). Even the way in which they answered our questions indicated their aptitude for change. They greeted the interviewers and readily answered all the questions. Interestingly, it was the modern ones that knew about religions and cultures of India more than the other two groups. We also noted that there were more educated persons in the modern homes than in the others. The modern ones had a variety of professional interests. The low and medium ones were mostly farmers. Some modern ones had set up small business and industries outside their villages. Some of them had even sent their children abroad for higher studies, and they were very proud of that. While the level of their articulation was very high, quite often they talked about the information they got from their children who were doing business or studies in other cities and countries.

The per cent of those that sought elected offices was highest among the modern ones. Even the level of their thinking was high. Some modern ones said that at least some candidates of the opposition parties should be elected to the state and federal legislatures to insure a good government. Regarding membership in political, cultural and other organizations, (table 3,4). The modern ones formed the highest per cent.

For recreation, the modern ones used not only the media but other sources. The others either did not know what to do or went to their own farms to spend time. Some of the low and moderate ones even said that they would either sit doing nothing or smoke cigarettes. (table 6).

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

The modern ones used all sources of information, both mass media and interpersonal. They read newspapers and journals in their own homes as well as in the public library. They listened to radio both at homes and community centers. They attended fairs, festivals and exhibitions. Even when they used interpersonal sources of information, they used all sources including opinion leaders. Some of the modern ones were also opinion leaders.

The attitudes of the low and high groups toward the media were different. The high group liked to have radio stations in their own villages. They believed that both radio and face-to-face methods should be used for election campaigns. They knew many radio programs that were broadcast specially for the rural people. They also said the radio messages were very useful. They listened to both KANNADA [redacted] and English language news broadcasts. They said they would trust radio news more than news on other media since they believe that radio newscasters are well educated and trained. Some of them subscribed to journals both KANNADA [redacted] and English. (tables 7, 8, 9, 10)

The modern ones had tried innovations not only in their professions but also at homes. They were using new electric pumps to irrigate their farms. Some of them had even developed small industries using the raw materials that were available in their own villages. They were the ones that encouraged their youngsters to seek higher education and newer professions. Some farmers had been growing new hybrids and trying new fertilisers. Most of their information on innovations came from mass media and interpersonal sources.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

CONCLUSION

Modernization is defined as a process of change in the way of life of a person in which he makes use of human and natural resources that are available in his own community and scientific theories and techniques that are developed around the world to achieve material happiness for himself and his people. Modern persons exist in all parts of the world including the so called underdeveloped countries. But their characteristics differ from community to community even in the same country.

Data collected in 1967 and 1972 in India show certain special characteristics of the modern persons in rural parts of that country. There is a close correlation between the awareness of these persons and their modernity. In order to get information on modernization, they seek both mass media and interpersonal sources. Without any help from the government, they strive hard to improve the quality of their lives. They use innovations in their professional as well as domestic lives. Information sources such as books, newpapers and radios are valuable possessions of these persons.

Since modernity is an aptitude of certain individuals, it seems, the governments of underdeveloped countries such as Inida should locate modern persons in rural communities and involve them in the national efforts for social change. In order to stimulate modernization, those governments should develop effective means of mass communication at the grass roots level. Radio is the most effective medium of such communication. The modern persons are the most important consumer of such communication.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

1. Gabriel, Almond and James Coleman, The Politics of Developing Areas, Princeton, N.J., Princeton U Press, 1960.

2. Sitaram, K.S., Some Effects of Radio Upon the Audiences of Rural India, doctoral dissertation, U of Oregon, 1969.

3. Sitaram, K.S., "Community Awareness Quotient (CAQ): An Indicator of Underdeveloped Community's Readiness for Social Change," paper presented at Hawaii International Conference of System Science, published by Western Periodicals Company North Hollywood, 1971, pp. 203-4.

Table - 1

AWARENESS

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

	Total	Low	Medium	High
N	184	71	52	61
Mean Awareness	65.94	20.66	67.63	117.19
Maximum	188	44	87	188
Minimum	4	4	47	88
S.D.	43.96	14.56	11.27	21.07

Table - 2

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

AGE	Low	Medium	High
20-29	11	4	6
30-39	21	8	19
40-49	19	15	21
50-59	11	13	11
60	9	12	4

Table - 3

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

OCCUPATION	Low	Medium	High
Unemployed	0	0	1
Farmer	56	41	25
Coolie	8	2	0
Business	0	1	4
Teacher	0	0	6
Government	3	3	12
Priest	1	1	4
Politics	3	2	7
Industry	0	2	2

Table - 4

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

ORGANIZATIONAL MEMBERSHIP

	Low	Medium	High
Congress	5	6	10
PSP	0	2	1
Swatantra	0	0	2
Janasangh	0	0	2
Village Panchayat	5	3	14
Cultural Associations	1	2	13
Committees	0	1	8
Coops.	5	13	20

Table - 5

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

EDUCATIONAL LEVEL	Low	Medium	High
None-Illiterate	42	26	2
Adult Literate	3	1	1
Primary School	20	17	24
Middle School	6	6	16
High School	0	2	15
College Graduate	0	0	3

Table - 6

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

SOURCE OF RECREATION	Low	Medium	High
None	34	5	1
Hobby	3	3	1
Radio	4	14	31
Farm	11	15	6
Film	10	0	6
Profession	1	0	0
Newspaper	2	2	14
Other	6	13	2

Table - 7

SOURCES OF INFORMATION: MEDIA

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

		Low	Medium	High
Where does he read newspaper?	Own home	2	3	19
	Other homes	3	3	13
	Library	7	8	21
Where does he listen to radio?	Own home	3	7	17
	Other homes	3	2	3
	Community radio	13	37	40
	All	0	1	1
Where does he see movies?	Own village	1	1	0
	Other villages	22	9	34
	Both			1
Where does he see exhibitions?	Own	0	1	3
	Other	3	6	20
	Both	1	0	2
Where does he go to fairs, etc.?	Own	6	5	15
	Other	30	20	24
	Both	8	18	16

Table - 8

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

SOURCES OF INFORMATION: INTERPERSONAL

	Low	Medium	High
Grocery Store	28	29	42
Restaurants	5	15	31
Temple	30	38	50
Mutt	10	14	25
Friends	10	26	50
Relatives	16	36	53
	N=71	N=52	N=61

Table - 9

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

ATTITUDE TOWARD THE MEDIA

		Low	Medium	High
Is it useful to have radio station in the city close to his own village?	No	39	25	19
	Yes	32	27	42
Which is the best medium for election campaign?	Face-to-face	15	17	18
	Radio	12	14	24
	Newspaper	1	0	1
Does he know if any radio programs for farmers?	None	64	12	9
	More than one	7	40	52
How many programs can he remember?	None	68	22	14
	More than one	3	30	47

Table - 10

ATTITUDE TOWARD THE MEDIA

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

		Low	Medium	High
Does he think these programs are helpful to rural people?	No	67	18	15
	Yes	3	27	42
For religion and cultural information, which source they prefer?	None	33	13	6
	Interpersonal	10	2	0
	Radio	26	36	54
Does he think this radio is useful to people?	No	57	14	12
	Yes	9	35	45
Does he listen to radio news in Kannada and in English?	None	61	16	8
	Kannada only	10	33	43
	English only	0	2	1
	Both	0	1	9
Does he think the radio news is trust worthy?	No	63	17	8
	Yes	6	32	52
	Cannot understand	1	3	1
	No opinion	1	0	0

Table - 11

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

MEDIA HABITS

	Low	Medium	High
Have radio	3	6	17
Subscribe to Journals Kannada	2	1	16
Subscribe to Journals English	0	0	2